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Keith N. Jeffers

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Kalidasa and Shakespeare considered

The comedy of the Sanskrit drama is not a moral or ideological corrective, an insightful undertow of satire or incisive wit; and its most common focus, the Vidūṣaka, is for the most part the unwitting object--not the wily guide--of our laughter. What John Palmer says of Shakespeare's fools emphatically does not apply to the Vidūṣaka: "His comic characters are not so much persons at whom we are invited to laugh as persons who please us to the point of laughter only in so far as we are able and ready to identify ourselves with their moods and perceptions."¹ And while the Vidūṣaka is absurd, he is not--like the modern Absurd--a challenge to the values of his context. Even the "parasite" of Plautus, who shares the Vidūṣaka's fixation on being fed,² is part critic mocking with his asides his master's romantic illusions.³ But the Vidūṣaka, though he may occasionally twit the love-lorn Nāyaka,⁴ is not meant to make us seriously question the hero's values.

And yet--on a completely different level--the Vidūṣaka does offer an "alternative" to the hero, one that is strongly felt in the totality of the *rasa*. He speaks for and embodies certain fundamental human urgencies. His pusillanimity, his suspicion of the ideal in any form, and particularly his notorious and perpetual hunger⁵ are expressive of self-preservation, security in retrogression, the stability of consolidation--in contrast to his master's idealism and predisposition to incautious expansion, externally-referent progression. If all life is viewed as the growth and development of "Kāma . . . the source from which we came and the object to which we go,"⁶ then the Nāyaka has in him more of the aspiring plant, the Vidūṣaka more of the stolid root. The Nāyaka is desire in self-transcendence, the Vidūṣaka--especially in his food orientation--is desire as subsistence, ever cycling back to safety and satiety.

As an element of *plot*, of course, the Vidūṣaka is often a kind of pander, greasing the course of the king's amours;⁷ and--at least in the later tradition--he functions too as an elegant versifier, even occasionally intensifying with his pretty utterances the Nāyaka's *rati* (and our *śṛṅgāra*).⁸ But as a personality type, he is a photographic negative of his master, a shadow to the king's ideality, resonating on a different, utterly human wave length.

The Vidūṣaka does not *satirize* the Nāyaka, nor does he--by word or deed--indict his undisputed better. He is not in any sense a "wise fool" or "licensed critic," but a laughable counterweight to the potentially ponderous love-interest. Without threatening the king's status as Nāyaka, this bald, homely, and unheroic gourmand gives the audience a kind of "human relief," returning us periodically from the hero's rarified heights of longing. This is perfectly consonant with the *rasa* theory, which recognized that the central emotional tone is brought to fullness through the succession of subordinate, even opposite, moods.⁹

DeQuincey's famous reflections "On the Knocking at the Gate in 'Macbeth'"¹⁰ are of value in helping us to understand the Vidūṣaka's relation to the Nāyaka. In brief, DeQuincey argues that Shakespeare--in *Macbeth*--makes the pervasive evil of plots and murders suddenly more striking, more clearly defined, by a reversion in the gate scene to the almost forgotten "everyday" world: "and the re-establishment of the goings-on of the world in which we live first makes us profoundly sensible of the awful parenthesis that had suspended them."¹¹ There are of course great differences between DeQuincey's subject and our own, but the basic process in question is the same: by the intrusion of a contrasting value, the general tone or texture is made more tangible. A totally homogeneous field remains "unfelt" until interrupted by variation. Our physiology tunes out, for example, even a continuous ringing sound--which may remain totally forgotten unless it changes volume, pitch, and so on. The status quo--even the passionate love--longing of the Nāyaka in Sanskrit theater--may fade, by our habituation to it, from too-persistent foreground to forgotten background. To take a metaphor from *kāma-sāstra*, the Vidūṣaka is like the little bites which paradoxically enhance the prolonged love act.

Interpreting a passage from the *Dhvanyāloka-locana*, S. Sundaracher says that "Hāsyā-rasa unwinds, so to speak, the intensity and concentration that characterise the other rasas."¹² In relation to the interaction between Vidūṣaka and Nāyaka, this *is* so on the local level, in so far as the Vidūṣaka's actions periodically, momentarily, release the dominant *śṛṅgāra* in bursts of incongruity. But the overall effect is not, as the word "unwinds" might suggest, a genuine *dispersal* of the play's erotic momentum, but a refreshment of it. The Vidūṣaka, by the sheer contrastive force of his "style," does not diffuse but rather refines and shapes our response to the total tone, tempering, as an alloy tempers, the intensity.

To substantiate these observations, I would like to examine the function of the Vidūṣaka with respect to the Nāyaka in the plays of Kālidāsa, particularly with regard to the dialectic proposed above, i.e., love vs. hunger, erotic vs. oral appetite.¹³

Sometimes this takes the form of a comic transition from the Nāyaka's passion to the Vidūṣaka's preoccupation. For example, when Duṣyanta asks him for help in a certain "matter," Mādhava replies instantly, "What? In eating *modakas*?"¹⁴ Or, as Purūravas pours out his heart to Māṇavaka, the Vidūṣaka brushes this aside in favor of his own cravings: "Let your hopes wait a little. Look to the life of a hungry brahman--it's high time to bathe and dine."¹⁵ A similar demand interrupts the king's love-longing in *Mālavikāgnimitra*;¹⁶ and when Agnimitra persists in his plea, the Vidūṣaka pleads in return his own parallel passion:

KING: You ought to be concerned for me!

VIDŪṢAKA: And you for me! My insides are frying like a pan in a market-place (p. 46, II.13ff).

He concludes this interchange by comparing the king seeking Mālavikā to a vulture circling above a slaughter-house! (p. 46, II. 13.7ff)

Quite often in Kālidāsa's plays, the Vidūṣaka directly compares his friend's romantic concerns with the needs of the belly. Mādhava, for example, comments in the following way on Duṣyanta's love for the country girl, Sakuntalā:

(*Laughing*) Just as somebody overstuffed with plump dates might long for tamarind, you--who enjoy the pick of women--have this longing [for Śakuntalā] (p. 70, III. 8.1-4).

In congratulating Purūravas on the receipt of an encouraging love-letter, Māṇavaka parallels the Nāyaka's joy to his own satisfaction in an offering of food when hungry. (p. 114, II. 13.1ff) Of special interest in this regard is *Abhijñānaśakuntala* VI. 13-13.2, where the king's agony over repudiating his beloved is met by this remarkable aside from the ever-ravenous Vidūṣaka: "Am I to be eaten up by hunger?" (p. 226) Noteworthy here are two elements: (1) The Vidūṣaka's petty self-absorption is used to control the *rasa*--to soften, though not stultify, its impact--by the intrusion of an innocuous and well-timed giggle. (2) The content of the aside is relevant to the *ādhikārika* action; the paradox of being *eaten up* by *appetite* applies strikingly to the Nāyaka as well as his humble companion--but it is the *difference* between them that is "the point," the difference between the pangs of expansion and the nagging needs of subsistence. The parallelism built into Mādhavya's aside was meant to be felt not as a "criticism" of the king, but as a clear and comical contrast.

In *Vikramorvaśīya* III, Purūravas, in the absence of Urvaśī, says that he finds some consolation in just hearing others speak of her, to which the Vidūṣaka replies, in what amounts to a burlesque of a *bhakta's* *anusmarana*:

Ah, yes! And I, when I can't get the tasty [rasālam]
mango, console myself wishing for it and repeating its
name [saṃkīrtayan] (p. 154, III. 10-10.3).

And earlier in the same act we find the following interchange:

KING: As the darkness is chased far away by the rays
of the moon--still hidden by the eastern mountain,
the face of the east, as if with its hair bound
back in a braid, draws my eyes.

VIDŪṢAKA: Ah, friend! Here [the moon] rises, gorgeous as
half a sugar-ball, lord of twice-borns!

KING: (*smiling*) Food is always the sole concern of the
man who thinks with his belly [lit.--udarikasya]
(pp. 144, 146, III. 6-6.3).

The tone of this passage is mellow and elegant: the wistful king graciously tolerates his comrade's amusing monomania. But part of the charm for us is in the recognition of a correspondence in obsession between these two otherwise vastly different characters. Purūravas is certainly right about his friend--Māṇavaka projects his hunger everywhere; but no less assertive is the king's own preoccupation, which transfigures the landscape into a lovely woman. What we have here is simply a subdued version of that projected love-energy which, according to a recurrent motif in Sanskrit literature, sees the landscape in terms of the lost or separated lover. (Cf. Rāma's first separation from Sītā in the epic; the *yakṣa's* longing in *Meghaḍūta*; Mādhava searching for Mālātī; Purūravas seeking Urvaśī in *Vikramorvaśīya* IV; the lover's search for Vāsavadattā at the end of Subandhu's poem, etc., etc.)¹⁷

In a passage cited by Lévi from his own MS of *Vikramorvaṣīya* we see a conscious development of the parallelism between the Vidūṣaka's and the Nāyaka's respective cravings. (But again, this reminder: the humor, the "meaning," is in their great difference in orientation and degree):

LE BOUFFON: Mon cher, qu'est-ce donc que l'Amour, cet
Amour qui te consume? Est-ce un homme?
une femme?

LE ROI: Une création du coeur, née sans cause et en
plein bonheur; l'aimable voie d'affection:
voilà ce qu'on appelle l'Amour.

LE BOUFFON: Je ne comprends pas.

LE ROI: Il est le fils du Désir.

LE BOUFFON: Ah! alors quand on désire, on aime?

LE ROI: Justement.

LE BOUFFON: J'ai compris. Ainsi, moi, je désire, par
exemple, aller manger à la cuisine.¹⁸

Compare the following English translation from the same play. The Vidūṣaka suggests that the king's yearning (*utkanthā*) may be dispelled by looking at all kinds of food, to which Purūravas replies with a smile:

*You can get pleasure in that, from the nearness of the
things you want. But what diversion can there be for
myself--wishing for the distant and rare [durlabha-]?
(p. 92, II. 2.14ff)*

This last example, by the way, also belongs to a subset of the desire-food dichotomy: quite often the Vidūṣaka, seeing as he does all human aspirations in physical terms, regards the hero's love-pangs as a bodily disease, and, according to his usual opinion, a curable one. It is in this spirit that Mādhava refers to Duṣyanta's "Śakuntalā-ailment" (*Śakuntalā-vyādhi-*) (p. 212, VI. 7.3-5). In a similar vein, Agnimitra's Vidūṣaka responds to the king's plea for romantic assistance with:

Oh fine! Like a poor patient you want the medicine
[auśadham] the doctor can bring (p.44, II. 11.1ff).

In *Mālavikāgnimitra*, the Vidūṣaka, standing with the king, greets Mālavikā's approach thus: "Oho! Here's treacle for the one [i.e. the king] who's drunk too much wine (p. 58, III. 5.25). And in *Vikramorvaṣīya*, Mānavaka says to the queen that a meal will cure the king of his "bile" (i.e. love-infatuation) (p. 130, II. 20.13), but shortly thereafter declares Purūravas "incurable" (p. 166, III. 9-10).

Although Kālidāsa at times reveals a conscious awareness of the nature of the Vidūṣaka-Nāyaka dialectic, and in so revealing enhances our experience of their contrastive qualities; still, the purpose is less the generation of comparative judgement than the modulation of mood. Kālidāsa's *rasa* (If we may use the term to refer to his particular kind of emotional tone) is a balanced and serene one, and the Vidūṣaka is used as a counterpoint to the Nāyaka's prolonged frustration.¹⁹

When we turn to Shakespeare, we find of course, to some degree, a similar counterpointing of the protagonists' actions with those of "fools." But there are also great differences between the Shakespearian and the Sanskritic usage--differences in the degree of demand on our intellects and our value systems, and particularly in the amount of validity granted the fool's stance. I would like to briefly illustrate the magnitude of these differences by a consideration of Touchstone from *As You Like It*.²⁰

Superficially, Touchstone may remind us of many Vidūṣakas in his concern for baser appetites and bodily needs. His attitude toward the country life so suddenly imposed upon him by his betters is reminiscent of, for example, Mādhavya's position in Act II of *Abhiñānaśakuntala*:

CORIN: And how like you this shepherd's life,
Master Touchstone?

TOUCHSTONE: Truly, shepherd, in respect of itself, it is a good life; but in respect that it is a shepherd's life, it is naught. In respect that it is solitary, I like it very well; but in respect that it is private, it is a very vile life. Now in respect it is in the fields, it pleaseth me well; but in respect it is not in the court, it is tedious. As it is a spare life, look you, it fits my humor well; *but as there is no more plenty in it, it goes much against my stomach.*²¹ (emphasis mine)

But here there is a certain authority--if only in the sly sophistication--which "challenges" the pastoral implications of Arden far more than the Vidūṣaka, in his irascible complaint, actually confronts the Nāyaka. And there is real substance--if not full corrective force--in Touchstone's response to Rosalind as the two first enter the forest:

ROSALIND: O Jupiter, how weary are my spirits!

TOUCHSTONE: I care not for my spirit if my legs were not weary (II. iv.3).

Touchstone's point of view, perhaps only a contrast to Rosalind's, perhaps a "realist's" qualification of it, sets the tone for the sojourn in Arden: repeatedly the idealism and romantic fancy of others will be balanced by the physicality of the fool.

As the Vidūṣaka's rumbling stomach interrupts the Nāyaka's flights of longing (noted above), Touchstone will not let Rosalind rest in her romantic reverie; as she reads aloud from Orlando's love poems to her, the fool retorts, "I'll rhyme you so eight years together, dinners and suppers and sleeping hours excepted (III. ii.96-98). And as the Vidūṣaka habitually links emotional savor and the joys of food, gustatory pleasure enlivens Touchstone's psychology:

TOUCHSTONE: It is meat and drink to me to see a clown; by my troth, we that have good wits have much to answer for. We shall be flouting; we cannot hold (V. i.10-12).²²

Shortly after this, Touchstone describes in the following terms his appropriation of the wench Audrey from a rival: ". . . drink, being poured out of a cup into a glass, by filling the one doth empty the other" (V. i.40-42).

However, as the above example reminds us, Touchstone, in contrast to the Vidūśakas of the *nāṭaka*, is a highly-sexualized being, is in fact *the* sexual focus of the play. As such, he holds important cards; he is part of the truth of love and, unlike the Vidūśaka, is meant to be felt as filling out the erotic reality of *As You Like It*.²³

Shakespeare is no Victorian, and many of his lovers are not without their sensual side (e.g., Claudio and Juliet in *Measure for Measure*, Romeo and Juliet); and certainly the courtly-love tradition, for all its idealizations and apotheosizations, had its eroticism.²⁴ But still, the young lovers of *As You Like It* indulge in a relatively sublimated form of love, and it falls to Touchstone to complete the picture, as it were, to fill in the physical infrastructure.²⁵

His courting of Audrey is disarmingly wicked, delightfully frank--in its lechery and admitted impermanence (this latter element being something of an assault on the "eternality" of love lauded by poets of love). Touchstone calls attention to sexuality whenever he sees it, and he sees it everywhere: he "chastizes" the shepherd Corin for encouraging the mating of his livestock (III.ii.78-85), sees infidelity as the chief fruit of marriage (III.iii.46-61), describes all the couples of the concluding marriage scene as "country copulatives" (V.iv.56-57, cf. his desire at III.iii.43 that the priest "couple" him with Audrey). He views marriage in the most fundamental light:

As the ox hath his bow, sir, the horse his curb,
and the falcon her bells, so man hath his desires;
and as pigeons bill, so wedlock would be nibbling
(III.iii.76-79).²⁶

And his description of a former amour is earthy and suggestive (II.iv.44-45).

Nor is Touchstone one to leave the sentimentalists to their sacred passions. With a pun on feign (1. pretend; 2. desire, i.e. *fain*), he says:

. . . the truest poetry is the most feigning, and lovers
are given to poetry, and what they swear in poetry may
be said as lovers they do feign (III.iii.18-21).

And, as Rosalind reads Orlando's love-doggerel, he mocks her in the same metre:

If a hart do lack a hind
Let him seek out Rosalind.
If the cat will after kind,
So be sure will Rosalind.
Wintred garments must be lined
So must slender Rosalind . . .
He that sweetest rose will find
Must find love's prick, and Rosalind (III.ii.101-112).

Hyper-sensitized to irony by modern artistic usage, the incautious reader, voracious to level every height and find suspect every sublimity,

may read a cynical irony into works which did not intend such a response. We must be wary of seeing Touchstone as the "realist" of *As You Like It*, and the "true" lovers as mindless idealists. To be sure, Touchstone voices a part of the play's conceptual reality, in contrast to the Vidūṣakas of the *nāṭakas* and *prakaraṇas*, who, for the most part, flit about the circumference of the love story, diverting us with their buffoonery, occasionally touching us with their loyalty (as in *Avimāra* or *Cārudatta-Mṛcchakaṭikā*), but sharing in neither the Nāyaka's spirituality nor his mature sexuality. Touchstone is closer to the heart of human urgencies and, like Caliban, must be admitted. As C. S. Lewis says in regard to the medieval dream allegory:

. . . it protects itself against the laughter of the vulgar--that is, of all of us in certain moods--by allowing laughter and cynicism their place *inside* the poem. . . . In the same way, the comic figures in a medieval love poem are a cautionary concession--a libation made to the god of lewd laughter.²⁷

But Touchstone is more than an escape valve. If he does not overshadow the more refined vision of love, he does demand from us a more comprehensive appraisal of it, a synthesis of "higher" and "lower" instincts. In fact, the appeal of Rosalind and Orlando's pastoral encounter is enhanced for us by the frame of Touchstone's ribaldry. (Compare the self-isolating love of Romeo and Juliet, which is experienced in its full poignance by those who can see the grip of impossibility closing in upon it.) Shakespeare is no reductionist. The effect of Touchstone's comic commentary is not cynicism, but the satisfaction of wholeness captured in a small compass.

The Vidūṣaka, on the other hand, is not a critic. He is, in his burlesque embodiment of appetite, an antic distortion of life, a fun-house mirror that mocks but does not actually modify the original. And unlike so many of the "boon companions" of world literature--Sancho Panza and the rest²⁸--the Vidūṣaka is almost purely a figure of "fun," important not in that he qualifies the "meaning" of the main action, but for his modal impact on the whole. Allowed his little impudences, he is no "licensed critic"²⁹ or "wise fool."³⁰ Even when a Shakespearian fool does not work a change in the other characters of a play (throwing away, as it were, insights lost on all but the *audience*), he is a source of balance and fullness in the ethos of a work: "The mere appearance of the familiar figure in cap and bells would at once indicate to the audience where the 'punctum indifferens,' the impartial critic, the mouthpiece of real sanity, was to be found."³¹ At times, notably in *King Lear*, the fool *does* work a great change in other characters. "Lear's fool" is a true touchstone of values in the bleak world of this play, where madness gluts the market and the fool is outdone in folly by everyone he meets.³²

Edwin Gerow has established the "unchangeability" of the Sanskrit Nāyaka, whose triumph is not in adjusting his personality to a demand for change, but in providing the depth of his perfection by enduring an ordeal of circumstance.³³ The Nāyaka, though he may be forced to pass through a period of delusion or involuntary suffering, is felt to be "right" throughout the works in which he appears. Even his instincts are in total accord with morality,³⁴ and the product of his instincts is glorious.³⁵ There is no scope for a Vidūṣaka to function in the same way as Lear's fool, who becomes "Lear's alter ego, his externalized conscience."³⁶ There can be in Sanskrit drama no such ironic reversal as an inferior besting his betters. The limitation of the Vidūṣava's humor to buffoonery is doubtless a product of the world-view which produced the Sanskrit theater: there is no room for

questioning the system.³⁷ However, viewed in terms of its function, the non-threatening character of the Vidūṣaka harmonizes with the drama's de-emphasis of "character development" or, more broadly, true change.

The Vidūṣaka in the two plays about Cārudatta shares with Lear's fool the distinction of being almost the only constant friend to his master in adversity,³⁸ and, again like Lear's fool, is sometimes a very moving figure in his loyalty;³⁹ but still, his function is primarily that of foil, of comic antithesis. The greatness and beauty of his master is lost on the Vidūṣaka.⁴⁰ The Vidūṣaka chatters frivolously at the foot of the mountain, but he does not challenge or change the Nāyaka, does not trouble our respect for the Nāyaka's ethos. He rather serves, at least in part, to set off his master's completeness as a man. Not only a source of relaxation from the ideal, the Vidūṣaka provides another kind of "relief" as well: He is like the photographer's companion, posed beside the colossus for scale.⁴¹

Obviously, this paper should not be considered a comprehensive treatment of all forms of humor in the Sanskrit drama, or even of the diverse characterizations of Vidūṣakas. I have discussed only certain fundamental aspects of function in the Vidūṣaka figures (with particular reference to those of Kālidāsa) and have tried to define these aspects more precisely by a hopefully-heuristic contrast with a few of Shakespeare's fools. Much more may, and should, be said about the great differences between the Vidūṣakas of various major authors, as well as their differing impacts on the tone of the plays in which they appear.

Perhaps even more important would be an analysis of those kinds of humor in Sanskrit theater which are not associated with the Vidūṣaka at all. There are many charming and at times subtle comic effects in the major dramas, a number of them based on the manipulation of dramatic irony,⁴² which far transcend in theatrical power most of the Vidūṣaka's horseplay. In this regard, we might note even, or perhaps especially, Bhavabhūti, who did not use the Vidūṣaka figure at all: though rare in his plays, Bhavabhūti's humor, when it does appear, is often far from ineffective.⁴³

NOTES

1. *Comic Characters of Shakespeare*, (London: MacMillan, 1946), p. xi.
2. Enid Welsford, *The Fool* (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1966), p. 7: "Most of the parasites of Plautus are little more than greedy beggars who are glad to earn a good meal by assisting their patrons in intrigue. . . ."
3. E.g., the "sponge's" remarks about Manaechmus I's infatuation with his mistress: "The woman flatters him as long as she sees what he's stolen [for her]." I.iii.20-21 of *The Twin Manaechmi*, trans. R. W. Hyde and E. C. West in *An Anthology of Roman Drama*, ed. P. W. Harsh (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960), p. 10.
4. E.g., "Even a slave girl makes kings dance in this way." (Ratnāvalī III.5.12.)
5. Typical of the Vidūṣaka even in Aśvaghoṣa.

6. John W. Spellman, introduction to *The Kama Sutra of Vatsyayana*, tr. Richard F. Burton (New York: Dutton, 1962), p. 42.
7. But this is quite innocent and sublimated procurement. Cf. the mention of the Vidūṣaka type as a genuine palace pimp in *Kāmasūtra* (e.g., VI.1.9); this sounds very different from, for example, the Vidūṣaka of *Mṛcchakatikā* with his built-in Brahmanical suspicion and hatred of courtesans. This latter is, by the way, a good example of how the Vidūṣaka in the major dramas is not allowed to function as a perceptive "critic." *Mṛcchakatikā* idealizes its good characters, and Mādhava's generalized (and perhaps "realistic") invective against all courtesans rings hollow, is in fact proved false, in the particular case of Vasantasenā.
8. E.g., *Nāgārāja* I.7.26ff., where the Vidūṣaka triggers the play's early modulation to *śṛṅgāra* by his lovely and sexy description of the Malaya mountain. Cf., by the way, Feste in *Twelfth Night*, who, in II.iv., sings to the royal court--like a troubadour--a woeful song of love.
9. Note in this regard not only the exposition of *anubhāvas*, etc., but also the idea of subordinate of "complementary" *rasas* developed by Ānandavardhana (e.g. *Dhv.Āl.* III.20). Note also Bharata's assertion that *hāsyā-rasa* is "śṛṅgārānukṛti" (*NS* VI.45, Gaekwad ed. p. 296. Abhinava, at *Locana* on *Dhv.Āl.* II.3, says "anukṛti" here = *ābhāsa*). Cf. G. K. Bhaṭṭ: The Vidūṣaka "turns the entire conversation into a different key" and affords "a contrast to the delightful and yet serious affair of love . . . and a balance to a more serious dilemma confronting Duṣyanta." (*The Vidūṣaka*, [Ahmedabad: New Order Book Co., 1959], p. 88.)
10. In Mark Schorer et al., *Criticism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1958); first published in *The London Magazine*, October 1823.
11. Schorer et al., p. 473.
12. "Humour in the Kumarasambhava Unveiled," *JOR*, Madras, VI,1 (January-March 1932), 1-7.
13. The Vidūṣaka's food obsession--no doubt meant in gentle parody of the voracious Brāhmaṇa--was most consciously developed by Kālidāsa, who repeatedly plays the Vidūṣaka's hunger against the Nayaka's love-longing. G. K. Bhaṭṭ seems to note, without comment, this dialectic: "When the hero [in *Śak.*] is consumed with anguish of love, he is devoured by hunger" (*The Vidūṣaka*, p. 68).
14. *The Abhijñānaśakuntala of Kālidāsa*, ed. M. R. Kāle, 10th ed. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1969), p. 62. All following citations from this ed. as well. I.3.9-11.
15. *The Vikramorvaśīya of Kālidāsa*, ed. M. R. Kāle, 11th ed. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1967), p. 132. All following citations from this ed. as well. II.22.3ff.
16. As all following citations, from *Mālavikāgnimitra*, ed. C. R. Devadhar, 3rd ed. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1966), p. 44. II.11.7ff.

17. Cf. also the peculiar and late "aṅka," *Urmattarāghava*, whose sole act is structured around an *ad hoc* mad scene.) Several papers, perhaps books, could be written about such passages, which were clearly intended to be *tours de force*, the distilled essence of courtly literary art. An analysis of their compelling, sometimes successful, sustaining of interest by a balance between emotional power and poetic artifice could be of great value in furthering our understanding of courtly Sanskrit literature as a whole.
18. *Le théâtre indien* (Paris: Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études, 1890), p. 112.
19. And, of course, it is also *hāsyā*--in the Vidūṣaka's "abduction" by Mātali, Act VI--which triggers the denouement of *Śakuntala*.
20. There is always a danger in taking a particular character to represent all members of a literary "type." But I believe that the elements of characterization discussed in this paper are discernible respectively (1) among all the "Vidūṣakas" of Bhāsa, Sūdraka, Kālidāsa, Harṣa, and Rājasekhara, and (2) among those figures called "fool" in Shakespeare.
21. III.ii.11-22. All *As You Like It* citations from Signet ed., ed. Albert Gilman, 1963.
22. Cf., by the way, Mānavaka in *Vikram*. II, describing his urge to tell a secret as like the state of being filled to bursting with food.
23. In Sanskrit drama, the Nāyaka is by no means a-sexual. His passion is often sublimated in courtesy and exquisite verse, but its physical component is certainly in evidence. His companion, by contrast, is a clear case of erotic arrestment, or, as the Freudian would say, of fixation in the oral stage. There is no question of the Vidūṣaka seriously interacting erotically with a woman. (Note in this regard the sexual mockery at work in the Vidūṣaka's ludicrous humiliation by a drunken woman and her lover in *Nāgārāṇḍa* III.) Contrast, by the way, the phallic aggression in the clown figures of Southeast Asian theater, many of whom may in other ways be historically related to the Indian Vidūṣaka. E.g., James R. Brandon, *Theatre in Southeast Asia* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 120: "Colin McPhee has described a Balinese wayang kulit performance he saw in which the chief clown unfastened his erect penis and clubbed to death hundreds of ogres with it." And note: ". . . the fool's bauble was sometimes 'obscene in the highest degree.'" (Robert H. Goldsmith, *Wise Fools in Shakespeare*, [East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1963], p. 4.)
24. Sexuality was operative, even formative, in the conventions of courtly love. See C. S. Lewis' *Allegory of Love: A Study of Medieval Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1948), and also portions of E. C. Dimock, "Doctrine and Practice Among the Vaiṣṇavas of Bengal," in *Krishna: Myths, Rites and Attitudes*, ed. Milton Singer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), pp. 41-63.
25. Mature love and sexuality are integrated in the Sanskrit Nāyaka, while in the West, due in part to the strict religious dichotomization of flesh and soul, we often find the segregation of "true" love and

- sensual love in separate figures in a work of art. Even in Shakespeare, this is often in evidence: note, for example, the opposition Caliban-Ariel, or the growing rift between Prince Hal and Falstaff, in regard to which Henry W. Wells says: "Flesh and soul in the end part company" (*The Classical Drama of India*, [New York: Asia Publishing House, 1963], p. 15).
26. Compare Lavache in *All's Well That Ends Well*: "I am driven by the flesh; and he must needs go that the devil drives" (I.iii.30). Also, in regard to the sexuality of Shakespeare's fools, note Costard in *Love's Labours Lost*, who is the first to fall from the Duke's decree of general celibacy.
 27. Lewis, pp. 172-173.
 28. Cf. Wells, p. 8: "Especially in the field of comedy, Gupta sophistication notwithstanding, there are no formulations of specifically comic attitudes, as Aristophanes' sensualism, Cervantes' romantic dualism, Molière's urbane materialism, or Machiavelli's calculated satire."
 29. Goldsmith, p. 7: "Since he was not held accountable for what his tongue wagged, the fool might clatter or speak unwelcome truths with comparative impunity."
 30. For a full analysis of this concept, see Goldsmith *passim*.
 31. Welsford, p. 269.
 32. This fool, alone in his loyalty to the king, is a great humanizing force, teaching his master, who must reach it through a "madness" of his own, the meaning of love. Note in *Lear* the multivalence of the word "fool" (discussed by Welsford pp. 258-259 and Goldsmith, p. 66), which is applied to many characters in diverse ways: its most stunning use is in Lear's outburst to the dead Cordelia, who has by her death proven this play's cruel equation of love given and suffering received: "And my poor fool is hanged!" (V.iii.367)
 33. See "The Persistence of Classical Esthetic Categories in Contemporary Indian Literature: Three Bengali Novels," *The Literatures of India: An Introduction*, ed. E. C. Dimmock, *et al.*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), pp. 212-238. Though many have questioned their validity *outside* of Sanskrit drama, Gerow's observations in this essay stand as a brilliant analysis of the Sanskrit dramatic tradition proper.
 34. E.g., Duṣyanta's sense that if he is attracted to Śakuntalā, she *must* be of his class, *Śak.* I.20 (Kāle ed., p. 30).
 35. E.g., Purūravas' siring the progenitor of three great lineages.
 36. Goldsmith, pp. 66-67.
 37. Related to this problem is Abhinava's analysis of humor as *ābhāsa*, as in effect a kind of burlesque, the performance of noble actions by one whose rank or nature disqualifies him from being taken seriously. (See pp. 177-178 of Benares ed., 1940.) Without considering all the subtleties of this passage, we should here note at least one clear implication of Abhinava's remarks: Sanskrit literature "feels" most

comfortable with that humor which recoils on its source (so that we laugh *at*, not with, the perpetrator); parody which discredits or challenges its object is not considered humor. Worthy of note also in this regard is the analysis of symbolic inversion in Barbara A. Babcock's introduction to *The Reversible World* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1978) The humor of the Vidūṣaka remains on the fringes of the category of symbolic inversion, which Gregory Bateson (notes Babcock) sees as "a form of 'negative feedback,' as one of the means by which the cultural system corrects itself" (Babcock, p. 24).

38. But again, the difference between the Vidūṣaka of *Cārudatta-Mṛcchakatīkā* and the fool in *King Lear*, related to the impossibility versus the possibility of character development in the plays' protagonists, is like night and day. The Vidūṣaka, from his opening speech on, is worked for laughs, and a little pathos. The fool, with his persistent mockery of the *real* fools surrounding him (especially Lear), is the catalyst for his king's transfiguring madness. Cārudatta is good from head to toe; it is his *society* which is corrupt and which, therefore, fails to meet the hero with a nobility equal to his own. And lest it seem a general indictment of the extra-literary milieu, even this "cruel world" is dispelled (along with Cārudatta's ills) in the play's closing "revolution." The action throughout is a plea for human fidelity, and the close assures us that the bonds of human love will out. Compare *Lear*, where: (1) Lear is responsible for his troubles, for his failure to know love; (2) yet, the world is intransigently cruel, the realization of real love and kinship with others assures nothing, at times even accelerates destruction.
39. Even more so is Avimāraka's companion, who shows some depth of love for the title hero. Note especially: (1) the Vidūṣaka's desire to die should Avimāraka prove to be dead; (2) the truly joyful reunion of the two friends (IV.20ff.).
40. Compare, for example, their respective reactions to the musical concert at the beginning of *Cārudatta* III. Like many highly negative figures in Shakespeare, this Vidūṣaka is no friend to music, and, appropriate to his typical character, compares it to indigestible food.
41. Compare this one-sided relation of clear unequals with the ironic and complex interaction of, for example, Don Quixote and Sancho Panza. Also, note Babcock, p. 28: "We seem to need a 'margin of mess,' a category of 'inverted beings' both to define and to question the orders by which we live." The Vidūṣaka helps to *define*, by contrast, the Nāyaka's ethical greatness and emotional grandeur, but there is no question of "questioning."
42. For example, the encounter of the disguised Arjuna with Abhimanyu in the late acts of *Pañcarātra*, or the confrontation of Ghaṭoṭkaca and Bhīma in *Madhyamavyāyoga*. The *Viddhaśālabhāṭikā* manipulates several planes of character ignorance to striking farcical effect in the wedding scene. And note especially the use of the "garden scene" in many plays, in which a character or set of characters spies upon another character or group (a kind of ironic schematization developed to many diverse ends in Sanskrit plays, perhaps most effectively used for all-out humor in *Nāgānanda*'s love-portion). I discussed the use of dramatic irony in a paper given at the Association for Asian Studies annual meeting in Los Angeles, March 1979, a paper which will be in publishable form relatively soon.

43. I am thinking particularly of the meeting of Rāma with his sons late in *Uttararāmacarita*. The humor here is only a part of the rich emotional mixture, which plays off Rāma's dawning intuition that these are his sons against the brash bravado of the young men (a confrontation reminiscent of the scene from *Pañcarātra* mentioned in note 42 above).

